

PARAGON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

TESTIMONY TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

**SUPPORT of Raised Bill No. 6674, AAC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPROVED ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the issue of the 'APRN Collaborative Agreement'. My name is Gerson M. Sternstein, MD. I am a board-certified Psychiatrist and am the Medical Director of Paragon Behavioral Health, a multidisciplinary outpatient psychiatric private practice in Kensington, Connecticut. Since 1994, I have had supervisory and collaborative relationships with, at last count, fourteen APRN-certified clinicians. On a personal note, I make the above statement with much pride.

In my experience, each of the APRN clinicians, without exception, were diligent and persistent in their collaboration with other healthcare providers, active in their pursuit of clear communication with their patients' primary care and specialist physicians, and diligent in their efforts to obtain previous clinical records. My clear sense is that these actions were a matter of course reflecting a dedicated adherence to nursing standard of practice. These clinicians have consistently made use of my expertise in keeping me informed of complicated clinical situations and asking my recommendations in clinical decision-making. On occasion, I have examined the patient in consultation. Through all these interactions I have found an openness and eagerness to learn and enhance skills in the effort to provide safe, excellent quality care. In fifteen years, truthfully, I cannot remember an occasion where a "written collaborative agreement" added any value to the established collaborative, professional relationships or to enhance patient care and safety.

I am strongly of the opinion that there be a clearly defined period of documented supervision for newly certified APRN clinicians, before they can be permitted to independently prescribe without a mandated written collaborative agreement. I would be glad to assist the process of developing necessary guidelines for this circumscribed period of supervision.

I hope this testimony is of help.

Cordially,



Gerson M. Sternstein MD
Medical Director
Paragon Behavioral Health